



Ozzy in Hawai'i

Osbornes take tour of historic battleship. See story on page A-3.



Hitting Hawai'i trails

MWR provides trips to hottest hiking spots. See story on page B-1.

Port Royal returns home

FC2(SW) Joseph W. Lovett,
Lt. j.g. Jonathan Fagins
USS Port Royal Public Affairs

Lt. Chris Davis
ESG 1 Public Affairs

USS Port Royal (CG 73) returned home to Pearl Harbor Thursday following a six-and-a-half month deployment with Expeditionary Strike Group (ESG) 1. The 300 crew members assigned to Port Royal returned to what the community dubs "the Navy's best homeport" following operations in support of Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom.

Port Royal deployed Sept. 2, 2003 with ESG-1, supporting a Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps-sanctioned strike group experiment designed to provide forces that are more flexible in the global war on terrorism. Under the plan, the Navy would field 12 ESGs and 12 carrier strike groups, in addition to the independent surface action groups that conduct maritime interdiction patrols and other counter drug operations around the world.



Photo by JOSH Ryan C. McGinley
A Sailor aboard USS Port Royal (CG 73) hugs his wife and child after returning home from a six-and-a-half month deployment with Expeditionary Strike Group 1.

Port Royal, a billion-dollar warship with state-of-the-art weapons and sensors, was air defense commander to the seven-ship flotilla. The ship controlled organic Navy and Marine air assets, as well as inorganic aircraft from U.S. and coalition maritime patrol aircraft in the

air defense and surface surveillance environments of the North Arabian Gulf, Indian Ocean and Red Sea.

Port Royal crew members returned to Pearl Harbor to share stories of catching oil smugglers, detaining individuals with possible links to Al-Qaeda, seizing

drugs, using C-4 to destroy illegal dhows, watching flight deck movies, or spending Christmas morning conducting maritime interception operations (MIO) in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

"This was a challenging and rewarding experience for us. We were able to exercise our equipment and our personnel in ways we haven't had the opportunity to do so before," said Capt. Pat Allen, Port Royal's commanding officer. "Working with Marine Corps air assets from USS Peleliu and with Marine special purpose forces in MIO was particularly unique given our traditional role in supporting carrier strike groups. It was an incredible experience for the ship and the crew."

Port Royal met with successes during the course of its deployment. It served as platform of choice for the 13th Marine Expeditionary Unit's visit, board, search and seizure (VBSS) forces, and was launch platform for the VBSS team during the Dec. 31, 2003 interception of a dhow transporting 2,800 pounds of hashish with an estimated street value of \$11 million. The 15 crew members of

▼ See PORT ROYAL, A-6

Tragedy unites Pearl City neighborhood

Karen S. Spangler
Assistant Editor

She is described by those who knew and loved her as a little angel with a big heart. They remember 5-year-old Charlotte Schaefer as a nurturing, compassionate, caring little girl who brightened lives and made friends wherever she went. It was that selfless, giving spirit that claimed the youngster's life when she perished Feb. 28 in an apparent attempt to help a 3-year-old playmate who had fallen into the muddy waters of a rainwater runoff basin near her home.

"She really knew how to be a friend. Her friends were very important to her. She had a very sharing spirit and was very compassionate and giving - whatever she had, everybody else could have," reflected her mother, Allison Schaefer.

Small children, bearing gifts of flowers, cuddly stuffed animals and handmade cards with crayoned drawings and poems, knock on the door at the home of Allison and Scott Schaefer in the quiet Navy housing community in Pearl City. Neighbors frequently call or drop by to offer a variety of help and support. Described by Allison Schaefer as a close-knit community where neighbors look out for one another, the drowning of 5-year-old Charlotte has bonded the families in the neighborhood even closer together.

The community has come together to provide support for each other and for the grieving family. The outpouring of support and help in every way imaginable has been incredible, according to the Schaefer family, and very much appreciated. "The neighbors have been wonderful. Almost everybody has given us cards with money. For Navy families, it's [finances] tight. That's a big sacrifice," said Allison Schaefer. She



Photo courtesy of Allison Schaefer
Charlotte Schaefer is shown here in a photo taken one week before she died.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be sent to a special scholarship fund, which they plan to establish at Our Lady of Good Counsel School in Pearl City. A special fund has also been set up at City Bank to help the Schaefer family with expenses. Check donations may be sent to: Friends of Allison Schaefer, c/o City Bank P.O. Box 3709 Honolulu, HI 96811. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at any City Bank location.

expressed gratitude to the many others who have been there for the family - including her husband's command at the Pearl Harbor Shipyard, the children's school, Chief Petty Officers' Association and chiefs' wives club, and her co-workers and friends in the media.

From cooking meals for the family, to running errands, to loaning vehicles to help with transportation when out-of-town family members came to Hawaii, and manning the phones, neighbors have pitched in, helped out and done whatever necessary to make things just a little easier for the Schaefer family.

Karen Eggers, a neighbor and close friend who has been in constant contact with the Schaefer family - coordinating the support effort and

helping wherever possible, remarked, "This is the best community in Navy housing that I've ever lived in. I am closer to people on this street than I am to members of my own family." "The response from everyone has been tremendous," said Eggers.

She said that the response from people has been, "You tell me what you need and when you need it and I will have it there."

"The neighborhood has become so much closer overnight," she said. "It could have been any of our children. I think we all realize that."

"Take each day as it comes. Get to know your neighbors. You never know when you or they will need help," Eggers advised. "The military needs to take care of each other. It's about people," she added.

The friends of Charlotte, or "Sharkey" as she was more frequently called, and her 7-year-old brother, Joshua, have frequently filled the Schaefer home. Now, in these difficult moments, Allison said it is comforting when the children come to visit her. "I see her in all of them," she remarked. "The kids tell me that she was their best friend." Last week, Allison gave a tea party for her daughter's friends and also attended a soccer game, cheering on Charlotte's team, the Dynamic Dolphins. All of the Dolphins now wear Charlotte's number "4" on the sleeves of their jerseys.

Allison talked about her grief at the loss of her daughter and what has helped to carry her through. "At first, you think the grief is going to swallow you up. I didn't think I would ever understand why it happened," she described. "But I thank God for the gift of this child. She was a blessing," she continued.

When Charlotte was born, she wasn't breathing. The medical team quickly took her

▼ See TRAGEDY, A-2

A little donation can save a life



Photo by J03 Devin Wright
GSE3 Nathan Navarre from USS Croomelin (FFG 37) has his blood drawn at a bone marrow drive held aboard the ship. The Navy Exchange is holding a bone marrow drive today from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. as well as at the Kaneohe Bay Marine Corps Base Exchange today from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Newest Federal Fire Department station opens

Members of the Federal Fire Department stand by their Hazardous Material Response team vehicle during the dedication ceremony of Fire Station 16 on Camp H.M. Smith March 5. The station will help service the Camp Smith area.

Photo by Lance Cpl. Jared Plotts



Lance Cpl. Jared Plotts
U.S. Marine Corps Forces
Pacific, Camp H.M. Smith
Public Affairs

Camp H.M. Smith and Navy officials attended the opening of fire station 16 at Camp Smith March 5.

The new fire station will service Camp Smith and as-

sist the local fire department in serving the surrounding community.

The station provides fire, medical, rescue, salvage, overhaul and hazardous materials services.

The average response time before the new station's inception was 14 minutes. Now local residents can expect fire trucks on the scene

far sooner, which could mean the difference between life and death, said Capt. Ronald R. Cox, Chief of Staff, Navy Region Hawaii.

The station has a crew of 11 firefighters, four of which will be on duty at all times. The members of station 16 will take two trucks on every call.

"We can send our HAZ-

MAT (hazardous material) truck, our special operations vehicle, an ambulance or another truck. The important thing is we have two vehicles out there," said Victor M. Flint, fire inspector for Federal Fire Department.

Fire station 16 is located behind the Sunset Lanai in the same building as the old hobby shop.

Tragedy: Child remembered as ‘angel’

Continued from A-1

away from her mother to revive her. “It was agony for just a few seconds,” remembered Allison. “I made all of these promises with God if he would bring her back.” After the accident Feb. 28, the Schaefers stood in a corner of the room at Tripler Army Medical Center, tightly holding hands and praying as doctors tried to revive the little girl. “We were praying and asking God to give her back to us,” said Allison.

“We miss her so,” she said. “What gets me through this is I see her as an angel. Maybe she was just meant to be with me for a short time. Looking at it that way makes it easier for me to deal with the loss of her,” she continued. “I was very blessed to have her.”

During a memorial service March 4 at Our Lady of Good Counsel in Pearl City, Allison Schaefer eulogized her daughter.

“I knew what I wanted to say and wanted my words to be a comfort and wanted it to be a celebration of her life,” said Allison. “I envisioned her walking beside me and holding my hand. I pictured her giving me some of her great courage,” continued Allison. “I think her spirit will always be a part of me.”

For Scott Schaefer, memories of his daughter Charlotte are held very close to his heart. “She’d hear my car and she’d be waiting. She’d give me a big tackle hug every single day,” he remembered. “We have to have cuddle time,” she’d say”, Scott offered, smiling as he shared his memories.

He explained that Sharkey wanted to be outdoors all the time and loved Hawai'i. Her favorite outdoor pastimes included swimming and riding her bike. But she also took ballet lessons, loved to draw and play with Barbie dolls, and adored animals. Part tomboy and part precocious princess, Sharkey would often play dress up and show off her beautiful dresses. Wearing pretend makeup and hot pink nail polish on her toes were as much a part of Sharkey as her tomboyish antics as she joined the boys in the neighborhood in looking for toad eggs. Allison smiled as she related that one minute her daughter would be all dressed up in a beautiful party dress and shortly afterward, the dress would be torn or stained with mud.

Sharkey wore her favorite party dress – one that she had worn as flower girl for her godmother's wedding – one last time. It was Naomi Johnson, a good friend and neighbor, who pulled Sharkey from the water after she drowned. So that Sharkey could wear her favorite dress once again, Johnson also stepped in to sew a tear in the dress and remove a lipstick stain – such trademarks were all very typical of Sharkey who would run outside to play while still dressed in her fancy clothes, explained Allison Schaefer.

One of Scott Schaefer's friends and co-workers, Chief Machinist's Mate (SW) Alberto C. Ruiz, leading chief petty officer at the Pearl Harbor Naval Shipyard, provided an escort for Charlotte on her journey back to the mainland. Funeral and graveside

services for the Charlotte will be held at 2:30 p.m. March 13 in La Grange, Ga., the hometown of her mother.

“I hope her death brings a message for people. Life is very fleeting and very precious – every minute,” said Allison Schaefer. “I hope they would live their lives the same way this little girl did. If you see a friend in need, do for that friend. If everyone had that same giving spirit and went out on a limb for a friend, this world would be a much better place,” she remarked.

The family has been flooded with cards – many of them heartfelt messages from Sharkey's classmates and friends. There is a common theme – a simple drawing of an angel with yellow hair and blue eyes. “She's their inspiration in many ways. I hope people remember the lessons she taught them,” said Allison.

“If a 5-year-old just out of being pure of heart and courage can touch lives, just think of the impact we have as adults with our capabilities and resources,” she continued. “Everything that we do on this earth – hopefully, we're a blessing to people, too.”

“I think of her as a little angel who jumped in to save another little child,” said Allison.

Left with her memories and the happiness that Sharkey brought not only to her own family, but to others who knew her, Allison Schaefer spoke quietly, holding back the tears. “There will never be a time that I don't miss her and think of her. She will always make me smile.”

Commentary

Fireside Chat

Navy Region Federal Fire Dept.

Be careful with candles

Victor Flint

Federal Fire Department

Anything with an open flame or a glowing tip should be treated with care and caution. Candles and burning incense have been the cause of numerous fires in military housing and barracks.

One home in Aliamanu Military Reservation was lost and its occupants were sent to

the hospital with injuries because of a child playing with a burning candle in the master bedroom. There were many other indications that candles were left burning in this home because there were many indicators of scorching on tabletops and other furniture throughout this home.

Two Navy homes were lost recently because the occupants were burning candles. In one of the incidents, the occupant was not home at the time the candle started the fire.

Everything was lost, but there were no injuries. The other home was lost, but more than the furniture and clothing were destroyed-the family lost a pet in this fire.

Hawai'i also lost a piece of history because the home that burned was a historical Pearl City Clipper Home built in the 1940s. There

have been two recent incidents in the barracks where the occupants were burning incense that caused combustibles to ignite when the burning incense dropped out of its holder.



U.S. Navy photo

Fire damage can completely destroy a family's home in a matter of minutes.

The fire that evolved gutted the occupants' rooms, but also affected the whole complex, disrupting the lives of the occupants. The individual's intentions of burning can-

dles and incense are usually to create a mood, but the mood could rapidly change if the following precautions are not practiced:

- Nothing combustible/flammable should be left near the candle and/or incense.
- Have a secure, non-combustible base for the candle and/or incense.
- Avoid tipping from pets, children and wind blown curtains.
- Do not have children light candles and/or incense. This is not a toy.
- As with matches and lighters, keep candles out of the reach of children.
- Never leave the burning candle and/or incense unattended. Never!
- Call 911 if you discover there is a fire.

For more information, call the Federal Fire Department's prevention division at 474-7785 or 474-7783.

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Aloha Osbournes: Ozzy, Sharon Osbourne visit, tour Battleship Missouri Memorial



Photo by JO3 Devin Wright

Sam Lowe, director of visitor operations for the Battleship Missouri, explains items on the ship's "Surrender Deck" to Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne during their visit Monday. The Osbournes were in town on a "working holiday," visiting sites and shooting footage for their show. They took time during their visit to explore the battleship, which was the site of the signing of the surrender documents ending World War II.

JO1 Daniel J. Calderón
News Editor

Two of the Osbournes brought their television show to the Navy Monday. Sharon and Ozzy Osbourne visited the Battleship Missouri Memorial and toured the ship.

"The concierge desk called this morning and asked if we could give a special tour," said Sam Lowe, director of visitor operations at the Missouri. "At first, they couldn't tell us who or even if the people were coming."

By noon, Lowe got word that the mystery guests were none other than the Osbourne couple along with a camera crew. They showed up at the memorial and began their tour. Lee Collins, vice president for marketing and sales, presented the couple with Battleship Missouri ball caps as tokens to remember their visit.

Lowe led the Osbournes and the MTV camera crew across the main deck of the battleship, explaining the armaments and history along the way. Ozzy, who said he has a great interest in the World War II era, listened as Lowe talked about the various events in the battleship's lifetime.

The tour wound through the ship's interior, with Ozzy and Sharon asking Lowe questions

along the way.

At the end, Lowe led the Osbournes and their crew into the captain's cabin. Ozzy expressed his appreciation for the tour and his admiration for the Sailors of yesterday and today.

"This has all been very educational," he said. "Being on the actual spot where MacArthur actually signed the documents accepting Japan's surrender was wonderful. This kind of thing you normally see only on TV. Being here makes me appreciate even more the sacrifices the Sailors have made and are still making for all our freedoms."

Ozzy spoke passionately about the freedoms the United States offers its people.

"I'm British, but the U.S. provides the greatest amount of freedoms, personal freedoms," he said. "I've traveled so many places in my life and other countries don't have as many freedoms as the U.S."

Osbourne has enjoyed performing in United Service Organization (USO) tours for troops deployed around the world in the past.

"I really like doing USO tours," he said. "Without those kids protecting us, we wouldn't have all the liberties we do now. I think some people in the states kind of take it for granted."



Photo by JO3 Devin Wright

Ozzy and Sharon Osbourne tour the bow, near the forward guns on the Battleship Missouri Memorial. The Osbournes were aboard Missouri to tour the battleship. Ozzy said he has been interested in World War II history for some time and was excited about visiting the decommissioned battleship. During his tour, Ozzy expressed his admiration for Sailors of the past and with Sailors currently serving on duty on ships and in stations around the world.

PPV set to take effect May 1

Karen S. Spangler
Assistant Editor

A new target date of May 1 has been set for the beginning of the Navy's public-private venture in Hawaii. The extension from the original April 1 date is necessary because Congressional confirmation for the venture has taken longer than anticipated.

Because of the delay, the lease-signing deadline has been extended from mid-March to April 16. The official process of notifying military sponsors of requirements for lease-signing has already begun.

The beginning and ending date of residents' rental agreements will need to be changed to begin on May 1. The ending date will be the projected rotation date, if it is before April 30, 2005, or April 30, 2005. Forest City Management will contact residents who have already mailed their completed rental agreement paperwork in order to facilitate date changes.

Phase one of the Navy's public-private venture in Hawaii will affect housing residents in the Halsey Terrace, Hokulani, McGrew Point, Moanalua Terrace and Radford Terrace communities.

Representatives from Forest City Residential Management, Inc. are available at two locations



US Navy Photo
The public/private venture initiative will take effect May 1. This is a change from the original date of April 1.

to assist housing residents: Navy Aloha Center and Moanalua Community Center (trailer). Hours of availability are as follows:

- Through April 30: 7a.m.- 6p.m. Monday through Friday.
 - Beginning May 1: 7a.m.- 8p.m. Monday through Friday and 10a.m.- 5p.m. Saturday and Sunday.
- Call 423-7713 at Navy Aloha Center and 423-7711 at Moanalua for more information.

Sailor 'Idol'-izes his daughter



Photo by PHAA Tucker M. Yates
MM1 William Velasco, from Batanes, Philippines, smiles with pride as his daughter, Camile Velasco, 18, of Maui, Hawai'i goes through her post-performance interview on the nationally-televised show "American Idol," in which viewers call in to vote for their favorite singer. The winner of the competition will receive a singing contract. Camile Velasco's next performance will be on the March 16 episode.

Navy News asks: *What do you think of highway racers?*



ET3 (SS) Jim Wyant
USS Greeneville
We just need more speed traps.



Lt. Cmdr. Linda Proulx
TAD to FISC
I would recommend there be more places where the law enforcement agencies can pull drivers over to the side of the road. Maybe if people see that going on it will help.



MM3 (SS) Craig Double
USS Tucson
I think the biggest problem is that many people have this young 'I wanna be a racer like in the movies' attitude. Maybe if they put some kind of race-track on base it would help people get rid of some of their adrenaline.



OSC (SW/AW) Bronderick Linnear
COMDESRON 31
Being in the military, we need to be careful as far as speeding is concerned. While it has become a widespread problem here, I think that the state and the military are both doing a good job to get people to slow down.



BM1 (SW) Danny Lawrence
EOD Mobile Unit 7
I think there ought to be stiff penalties for these people. They are putting peoples lives on the line here. I have children and these drivers could be jeopardizing my kids safety and well-being.

Traffic safety stand down

Navy Region Hawai'i, in conjunction with the Honolulu Police Department, is hosting a series of information sessions aimed at educating Sailors on the dangers associated with excessive speeding.

Rear Adm. Barry McCullough, commander Navy Region Hawai'i and commander Naval Surface Group Middle Pacific, invites members of commands across Oahu to the sessions which will be held at Sharkey Theater on Naval Station Pearl Harbor on the following days:

- March 18 at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.
- March 19 at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.



Photo by PH3 Johansen Laurel
Fusako Cox of San Diego waves a red blanket to say goodbye to her son Marvin Cox, who is aboard USS Coronado (T-AGF 11). Marvin Cox is a contracted Military Sealift Command civilian mariner. The Navy is testing a new manning concept aboard Coronado that combines the skills of Navy Sailors and MSC CIVMARS.



U.S. Navy graphic.
Artist's concept of the 210-meter (689 feet) DD(X) destroyer design by a Northrop Grumman Corporation-led team selected by the U.S. Navy to complete the system design for the Navy's advanced, 21st century surface combatant DD(X).

Hybrids on the high seas: Fuel cells for future ships

Ed Walsh
*Office of Naval Research
Public Affairs*

As hybrid electric cars become more commonplace on America's highways, the Navy is working to bring hybrid electric ships to the high seas. The Office of Naval Research is developing innovative propulsion systems based on new fuel-cell technology for efficient generation of electrical power and greater design flexibility for future ships.

To ensure a relatively quick transition to this promising technology, ONR is funding development of a method to extract hydrogen from diesel fuel. A diesel reforming system would take advantage of the relatively low cost of the fuel and the Navy's established infrastructure for buying, storing and transporting it.

Unlike gas turbines and diesel engines, fuel cells do not require combustion, and therefore do not produce pollutants such as nitrogen oxide. Fuel cells are also far more efficient than combustion engines. ONR Program Officer Anthony Nickens explained that "the Navy's shipboard gas turbine engines typically operate at 16 to 18 percent efficiency, because Navy ships usually sail at low to medium speeds that don't require peak use of the power plant. The fuel cell system that ONR is developing will be capable of between 37 to 52 percent efficiency."

Moreover, fuel cells will permit design of a "distributed" power system, since un-

like conventional engines, they can be dispersed throughout the ship instead of being co-located with the ship's shaft. This added flexibility will improve ship survivability.

Nickens said that the Navy's DD(X) land-attack destroyer program is very interested in fuel cell technology as a supplemental power source. Fuel cells combine improved efficiency, low emissions and design flexibility, all of which help slash shipbuilding costs—a bottom-line goal of the Navy's current "transformation" efforts.

ONR is testing a 500-kilowatt diesel fuel reformer, or integrated fuel processor, that is compatible with a proton exchange membrane fuel cell, at the Department of Energy Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory in Idaho Falls. Reforming diesel is especially tricky due to the sulfur present in the fuel. The integrated fuel processor heats and vaporizes the diesel, then the sulfur in it is converted into hydrogen sulfide. The hydrogen sulfide is then exposed to zinc oxide, oxidizing the sulfur into sulfur dioxide and separating it from the hydrogen.

The testing will continue through June to prove out the reforming process. Meanwhile, ONR is looking at design approaches to reduce the size of the processor, which consists of an arrangement of valves, water-gas shift reactors, an oxidizer and other components, so that it won't take up too much space aboard a Navy ship.

half, there will be plenty of conversion opportunities available for top performing Sailors," said Lt. Cmdr. Patricia Loonam, enlisted community manager for the MA rating. "If you've been thinking about converting, the time is now."

The rating has grown significantly in the past few years, going from under 2,000 in September of 2002, to nearly 8,000 people at present.

Loonam says the community,

which has over the last two years posted better-than-average advancement opportunity, is on track to reach a goal of 9,584 by the end of this fiscal year.

The areas of greatest need are petty officers with three to nine years of service and chief petty officers with 15 to 18 years of service.

"Growing the rating and making it more viable means we really need solid, experienced enlisted leader-

ship," added Loonam.

She was quick to add, however, that help was not needed at the E-6 level unless the applicant is a signalman (SM).

"We are still holding some slots open for first class SMs," she said. "We think there are some natural skills they could bring to the rating, and we want to offer them MA as a conversion option."

The Navy approved the disestab-

lishment of the SM rating last year. It becomes effective Sept. 30. All SM-rated personnel were to have submitted rating conversion requests by Jan. 31.

Active-duty Sailors interested in becoming a master-at-arms can refer to the MILPERS 1440-010 paragraph 16 for more information. Application instructions for Reservists are contained in NAVRESFOR 02/04.

Coronado visits Hawai'i

JO2 Lisa Wassilieff
*Navy Public Affairs Center
San Diego*

The Sailors and Military Sealift Command (MSC) Civilian Mariners (CIVMARS) onboard the command and control ship USS Coronado (AGF 11) left San Diego March 5 and pulled in to Pearl Harbor Thursday.

Many of them said March 5 was a day of excitement and sadness as they left their homeport of Naval Submarine Base Point Loma, Calif., to deploy to Yokosuka, Japan.

Coronado is replacing the command ship USS Blue Ridge (LCC 19) while it undergoes a maintenance period. For Senior Chief Bill M. Porter, Coronado's senior enlisted leader, providing a command platform for the Commander, Seventh Fleet staff will be a unique opportunity.

"We have a lot of ground to cover in taking on this responsibility. We will be taking care of a different staff. We will be meeting all their unique requirements," Porter said.

Coronado is also testing an innovative concept of manning dur-

ing its trip to Japan. Usually a ship of this type is manned by a crew of 481 Sailors. Coronado will only have 117 Sailors and 146 CIVMARS. This combined crew is an experiment directed at operating Navy ships at a reduced cost while maintaining and improving capability. This transition is a first for the Navy. Nelson D. Betram, a CIVMAR who works as Coronado's cargo officer, said he is looking forward to being part of this experiment and deployment.

"I am ready for this new adventure. I can't wait to sail the seven seas and spread the Navy's good will," said Betram, 33, from Roswell, N.M.

Coronado just recently completed a two-month yard period. During that time, its basic engineering, navigation and hotel services were converted to civilian specifications. For example, the top racks in the CIVMAR berthing were removed and additional storage spaces were added. Empty spaces were also converted into staterooms. More lounges were added next to the berthing areas and the capacities of the ship's fresh water tanks were also increased.

There are also a few differences between Navy Sailors and CIVMARS. For Sailors, they serve on Coronado for approximately three years, depending on their rating, with the opportunity for their next assignment to be on shore. CIVMARS, on the other hand, serve four months at a time rotating from ship to ship, potentially meaning they would stay at sea for extended periods of time.

During this deployment, CIVMARS will be performing the duties of navigation, propulsion and auxiliary machinery operation, maintenance and repair, food service and other utility type responsibilities. The Sailors on board will be operating the communications and intelligence equipment, weapons systems and other command mission capabilities. According to the ship's commanding officer, Capt. Chris D. Noble, this new process will bring positive results.

"There is an important need for us over there," he said. "Our junior personnel are being tasked with this challenge, and I am so grateful to have men and women who can make these kinds of sacrifices."

Charlotte Sailors breathe underwater

JO3 Corwin M. Colbert
COMSUBPAC Public Affairs

It does not take a rocket scientist to know that for a submarine to stay submerged, it must have the ability to create and store oxygen for its crew to breathe. However, few know how the submarine actually accomplishes this.

Onboard USS Charlotte (SSN 766), Chief Machinist Mate (SS) Bryan Larson, leading chief petty officer of auxiliary division, explained the unique process of how a nuclear-attack submarine produces oxygen, stores the oxygen, maintains oxygen levels and balances the ship's atmosphere while submerged.

"When we submerge, we go into re-circulate mode, meaning we use the same air in the sub's atmosphere," said Larson. "We run equipment that takes carbon dioxide (CO2) out of the air, called CO2 scrubbers. We have two of them onboard. The scrubbers use a liquid chemical called amine that is mixed with water that we circulate through the scrubbers. When the solution is cold, it absorbs CO2 and when it is hot, it releases it. We compress the CO2 and then we discharge it."

Larson said USS Charlotte has a machine that removes carbon monoxide and hydrogen out of the submarine's atmosphere called a carbon monoxide/hydrogen burner.

"The burner converts carbon monoxide into CO2 which is then removed by the CO2 scrubber. We take the hydrogen and turn it into water vapor, collect it in plastic bottles and dispose of it overboard through the sanitary tank," he said.

According to Larson, the self-sufficient submarine can do more than remove harmful waste from the air. It can convert seawater to oxygen.

"We send the sea water through a distilling plant. Next, we filter it through a demineralizer that takes the minerals out of the water. It is then put in a deionized water tank," said Larson.

After the seawater is converted to deionized water, Larson explained that the oxygen is produced using an electrolytic oxygen generator.

"The generator takes the deionized water and mixes it with a liquid potassium-hydroxide solution called KOH inside a cell. We use KOH as a catalyst. Once inside the cell, we send an electric charge that splits the water cells into oxygen and hydrogen. The hydrogen is disposed of overboard in the form of a gas. The new oxygen can be put into the ship's atmosphere or in oxygen flasks."

If the oxygen level onboard the submarine is low or if there is an emergency, the submarine has chlorate candles, also known as oxygen candles, which last approximately two hours.

"If we lose power or we want to increase the oxygen level on the ship and stay stealthy underwater, we would use them. The candles come in cans. We take them out and put them in a furnace two at a time," said Electronics Technician 2nd Class (SS) Robert Felps of the navigation division.

These atmospheric systems and equipment enable USS Charlotte and all U.S. Navy submarines to operate submerged for long periods of time, allowing them to conduct their missions.



Photo by JO3 Corwin M. Colbert
MM3 Jesse White, USS Charlotte (SSN 76), inspects an oxygen generator cell. The cell stores water cells to be used to create oxygen for the submarine to use throughout the submarine enclosed atmosphere.

Master-at-arms rating filling fast, opportunities still exist

Chief of Naval Personnel Public Affairs

Sailors interested in joining the master-at-arms (MA) rating still have plenty of opportunities, but personnel officials say the rating is growing fast and will soon be reaching capacity.

"We have a good billet base right now, but over the next year and a

Port Royal: Sailors ‘plank owners’

Continued from A-1

the dhow, with possible links to the Al Qaeda terrorist network, were detained and delivered to coalition forces.

The ship participated in regional engagement exercises in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility, providing MIO training to Arabian Gulf state naval forces during Exercise Iron Magic in December 2003.

In January, Port Royal participated in Sea Saber, the fifth in a series of multi-national exercises based on the proliferation security initiative (PSI) announced by President Bush in May 2003 in Krakow, Poland.

Thirteen of the 16 coalition PSI participants provided personnel and military as well as law enforcement forces to the exercise.

Port Royal served as blocking ship to the simulated WMD-carrying vessel, played by

USNS Saturn (T-AFS 10).

For many Port Royal crew members, the deployment began in April 2003 when the ship began its work-up and interoperability training with the five other surface ships and one submarine assigned to ESG-1. Crew members say they are ready for a rest.

“My kids are the only thing I am thinking about seeing right now,” Storekeeper 2nd Class Mark McArdle said.

Culinary Specialist Chief Petty Officer Thomas Esclito expected duty and a plate lunch the day the ship returned, but the day after is a different story. “I am going to have Christmas with my two kids around our brown tree that is still standing, surrounded by gifts,” Esclito said.

Some crew members will take advantage of the beauty Hawai'i has to offer.

“I want to kiss the sand,” said

Electronics Technician 3rd Class Jeff Aldridge, an avid beach-goer and outdoorsman.

“I can't wait to just get in my car and drive,” said Fire Controlman 2nd Class (SW) Brian Dickerson, owner of a red 2002 Ford Mustang.

Strike group commander, Rear Adm. Bob Conway said the Port Royal and the rest of the ESG have earned his appreciation.

“Every Sailor and Marine in this strike group is a plank owner in our service's transformation. That title has come with tremendous sacrifice in time, in energy and in our individual preferences,” Conway said. “Breaking with paradigms is a difficult prospect to consider, let alone execute. But did they do it? You bet they did! They made it happen the way they always make it happen, and I am very proud of all our Sailors and Marines.”

Taxi: Naval Medical and Dental Clinic program helps protect Sailors

JOSN Ryan C. McGinley

Staff Writer

Sailors of Naval Medical and Dental Clinic commands here in Hawai'i are now more responsible and protected because of the new program “Arrive alive/arrive safe.”

The program, which started Jan. 1, provides Sailors and Department of Defense civilians in the command the option of deferring cab payments in urgent situations. Sailors who find themselves without transportation, money or don't want to drink and drive can utilize this tool and pay back the command at a later time.

“The goal is to provide people with the opportunity to make the right choice and to give them the means to protect themselves,” said Hospital Corpsman 1st Class Shane Hicks, coordinator of

the program.

The command issues cards to Sailors with serial numbers on them. The Sailor can then give that number to “The Cab” company, which allows the person to remain virtually anonymous except to the person who is in charge of reimbursements. The Sailor will then refund the command at a later date.

The program aims to provide a safety net for Sailors while teaching them accountability and core values. “We do give them their card. They do get their ride at the time, but they're responsible for paying that back and that puts the responsibility back on them,” said Hicks.

The chiefs' association provided funds to get the program started, said Command Master Chief (SW/FMF) Gustavo Beltra, Naval Medical Clinic.

He said chiefs in the command wanted to take a proactive approach ensuring everyone has choices and outlets from situations. Sailors can still utilize the bus system or call a friend.

“It provides options and educates them,” said Hicks.

Beltra said the program is open to officers and enlisted Sailors, and they have taken it a step further than other similar programs by making the program available for all situations that may arise.

He then said the program evolved into more of shipmates helping shipmates in every situation.

“When we started this out, it was to keep people safe and provide an alternative and a choice to making the wrong decision, and allowing them every possible opportunity to keep from drinking and driving,” said Hicks.

Coast Guard ‘Columbo’

Lt. Cmdr. Todd Offutt

Coast Guard Sector Honolulu

Public Affairs

Hawaii's drug problem is not new to the Coast Guard (CG). Their marine investigators have long dealt with CG licensed and documented merchant mariners and the ills of illicit drug use. When mariners test positive for drugs under a pre-employment or random drug test required by the U.S. Department of Transportation, they often end up before an investigator. Or is often the case, the investigator finds them.

“Usually, mariners end up coming to us because they realize that we have a mission both to safety and mobility. We just want to help them get clean and back to work,” said Machinery Technician Chief John Price. But occasionally, they have to track them down like the famous TV investigator, Columbo played by Peter Falk. Occasionally, this even involves coordination with investigators from the Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) and other agencies.

While personal drug use among mariners around Hawaii is not new, or even unique to the area, the nature and type of drugs locally seems to be getting more serious. “These days, we see greater use of methamphetamine (or ice) and cocaine, where in the past there was more marijuana (pot),” according to Lieutenant Mike Lendvay, the area's drug and alcohol program inspector at CG Sector Central Pacific based in Honolulu. His responsibilities extend throughout the Pacific to an area roughly the size of the mainland U.S. Yet no matter their choice of drug, the consequences are equally serious. A positive test triggers a chain of events that can end with the suspension or revocation of a mariner's credential. Getting it back can involve professional treatment, undergoing a series of random tests, enrollment in an after treatment program, evidence of good behavior and the loss of income from their license or document for a year or more.

Nationwide, CG Investigators have the authority to issue subpoenas, present cases before an administrative law judge, conduct investigations and interview witnesses. Taking care of drug users is just part of their job. They also investigate marine accidents and process violations of laws and regulations, including costly penalties up to \$25,000 or more. In many ways, their diverse backgrounds help them relate to mariners and perform their jobs as investigators.

“Just a year ago, I was a boarding officer and managing an engineering team on a Coast Guard cutter,” added Chief Price. “These days, I'm helping mariners navigate the challenges and consequences of drug use, and trying to prevent future marine accidents by determining what caused them.”

To learn more about Coast Guard investigations, visit the Internet web site at www.uscg.mil/d14/units/mso-hono/.